

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, CA

SUBJECT: DAY OF PROTEST SUPPORT LACKING IN QUEBEC CITY

1. "NATIONAL DAY OF PROTEST" FIZZLED IN QUEBEC CITY JUDGING FROM SKIMPY TURN OUT AT WELL PUBLICISED DEMONSTRATIONS. LOCAL ORGANIZERS PLANNED EARLY MORNING PICKETING AT VARIOUS SITES ALREADY BEING STRUCK WITH NOON GATHERING IN DOWNTOWN QUEBEC CITY PARK. ONLY ABOUT 500 ACTUALLY SHOWED UP AT MID-DAY TO HEAR SPEAKERS REPRESENTING CLC, CNTU, AND QUEBEC TEACHERS' FEDERATION (CEQ) DENOUNCE GOVT ANTI-INFLATION MEASURES AND CALL FOR MORE MILITANCY ON PART OF WORKERS. THOSE PRESENT REPRESENTED BROAD CROSS-SECTION OF QUEBEC WORKERS AND INCLUDED MANY STUDENTS AND UNEMPLOYED WORKERS. THEY LISTENED PEACEFULLY TO SHORT SPEECHES AND DISPERSED AFTER ONE HOUR.

2. NEWS MEDIA REPORTS ESTIMATE 15,000 QUEBEC CITY AREA WORKERS ABSENT FROM WORK. HOWEVER, CASUAL OBSERVATION OF AREA WORK PLACES INDICATE FEW NOTABLE DESERTIONS. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IS RUNNING NORMALLY AND PROVINCIAL GOVT EMPLOYEES REMAIN AT WORK. NOTICABLY AT WORK ARE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS WHO HAVE GRADUALLY DRIFTED BACK TO WORK SINCE THEIR STRIKE BEGAN FALTERING SHORTLY AFTER ITS ONSET IN EARLY SEPTEMBER. CONSTRUCTION WORKERS ARE REPORTEDLY BACK ON JOB THROUGHOUT MOST OF PROVINCE, UNCLASSIFIED

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WITH ONLY MAJOR HOLDOUTS BEING MONTREAL AND HULL. HOWEVER,

EMPLOYERS IN BOTH THESE CITIES ARE EXPECTED TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE SET IN OTHER AREAS BY ATTEMPTING TO OPEN SITES WITH HEAVY POLICE SURVEILLANCE AS EARLY AS NEXT WEEK.

3. QUEBEC CITY'S 700 POSTAL WORKERS, WHO REMAINED ON JOB DURING RECENT SERIES OF ROTATING WALKOUTS, ACROSS CANADA, ARE OFF JOB TODAY IN DOUBLE PROTEST. OTHER WALKOUTS HIT BELL CANADA AS WELL AS VARIOUS COMPANIES IN PAPER, SHIPBUILDING, RUBBER, TOBACCO, AND BREWING INDUSTRIES. OUTSIDE QUEBEC CITY, SOME 3500 ASBESTOS WORKERS ARE OFF JOB IN AREA OF THETFORD MINES. THEY ARE PROTESTING "FORCED" SETTLEMENT OF 7-MONTH OLD STRIKE IN THEIR INDUSTRY - REACHED ONLY HOURS BEFORE ANTI-INFLATION MEASURES CAME INTO EFFECT ONE YEAR AGO.

4. NOTABLY ABSENT FROM DEMONSTRATIONS DURING THIS PROTEST DAY WERE QUEBEC TEACHERS, MEMBERS OF CEQ. THE CEQ DECIDED TO REMAIN IN THE CLASSROOMS AND "EDUCATE" STUDENTS AND PUBLIC BY DISTRIBUTING A 37-PAGE "14TH OF OCTOBER MANUEL." THE MANUEL, A "HISTORY OF INFLATION AS ENCOUNTERED DAILY BY MEN AND WOMEN ACROSS CANADA" IS DIRECTED AT CHILDREN AND THE GENERAL POPULATION AND CONTAINS SUCH PRACTICAL EXERCISES AS COMPUTING PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN PRICE OF CIGARETTES, BEER, AND BLUEJEANS. QUESTIONED ABOUT TEACHERS FAILURE TO JOIN PROTEST, CEQ SPOKEMEN EXPLAINED THAT TEACHERS WERE "WORN OUT" AFTER 14 MONTH STRUGGLE. ALSO NOT ON STRIKE WERE UNION MEMBERS OF QUEBEC'S SMALLEST UNION IENRAL, THE CENTRALE DES SYNDICATS DEMOCRATIQUES (CSD). STATING HIS OPPOSITION TO GOVT ANTI-INFLATION MEASURES, CSD PRESIDENT PAUL-EMILE DALPE SAID NEVERTHELESS STRIKE SUCH AS TODAY'S WAS USELESS AND SIMPLY A "LOSS OF A DAY'S SALARY."

5. WORKERS CITE THREE REASONS FOR THEIR RELUCTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS: FATIGUE FROM LONG STRIKES ALREADY IN PROGRESS OR ONLY RECENTLY ENDED, FEELING THAT STRIKE IS USELESS AND ONLY CAUSES LOSS OF DAY'S PAY, AND FINALLY, FEAR OF EMPLOYER REPRISALS, ESPECIALLY IF MANY WORKERS DO NOT WALK OFF JOB.

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